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Participation Officer

Children in Care Council Update

Purpose

1.1 Children in Care Council Summary

This report provides a summary of participation activities over the last quarter, ensuring Corporate Parenting are sighted on activity and enabling direction to be set where required.

Key activities include:

- I. Children in Care Council Meetings
- II. Residential Participation
- III. Virtual School Enrichment Events
- IV. Newly Qualified Social Worker Induction Training
- V. Local Authority Collaboration

- 1.2 The report highlights the work the Children in Care Council (CiCC) have been doing, what is important to them and how they impact on services. It also explains the challenges they face which Corporate Parenting Committee may be able to help with.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the content of the report and feedback from CiCC.

Reason

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee need to know that the CiCC is being run well. It provides information and evidence that the voices of the children and young people in care are being heard and having a direct influence on services. The report also ensures that the voice of young people is heard at the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Supporting information

4.1 Children in Care Council (CiCC) Meetings

There have been three meetings of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) since the last report, October, November, December 2021 - topics discussed as follows:

- **October Meeting** – Change Grow Live Advocacy Service attended to share marketing materials and gain feedback from the CiCC.

Key points were;

- CiCC Members felt the materials were too formal
- To be made child friendly
- Add in more images and make it more colourful
- Remove an image of the 'ear'

Change Grow Live will be invited to a later meeting to feedback 'you said, we did'.

- **November Meeting** - The Community Development Officer attended to discuss Youth Employment and the project that was currently being developed for a Youth Employment Hub in the City.

Young People were asked:

1. Tell me how you feel about how well your school was with careers options?
2. What do you think schools could do better about careers/education?
3. What do you think are the main barriers for young people when looking for jobs?
4. What support do you think that young people need for access to training and employment?
5. How do you feel about applying for jobs?
6. If there was a Youth Employment Hub, would you prefer it to be virtual, face-to-face or a mixture of both?

Key points made by CiCC Members in response to these were:

- Schools had good advice and information available, however, one member felt pressured into a career path that she did not want to explore
- Schools should try to support further when a young person is unsure what they want to do and advice further whilst not pressuring into a particular area
- It is difficult to gain employment with little or no experience and the process of applying needs to be simplified
- More accessible support for young people seeking employment including interview practice
- Have different methods of applying for jobs such as mobile phone apps or texting

- Face to Face and Virtual options for the Youth Employment Hub to be accessible to all

Following the meeting The Participation Officer sent out information provided with a QR Code to the consultation to CiCC Members, Residential Homes and to the Head of Fostering to disseminate to relevant staff and CYP.

The Community Development Officer will be invited to a later meeting to feedback 'you said, we did'.

- **December Meeting** – A Face to Face event at Megazone in Derby following the success of the previous event in the Summer Holidays. This event was organised by the Participation Officer as a thank you to the members for their commitment to the CiCC throughout the year and as a 'Christmas Celebration', along with promotion of the CiCC.

This allowed opportunity for young people who were considering joining the CiCC to come along and meet the group in an informal and fun setting. The event was attended by all those who regularly attend CiCC meetings with the addition of 2 new members, a great time was had by all.

This included informal consultation gaining feedback from members regarding the potential name change of the Children in Care Council, it was agreed by all to discuss further at a later meeting after members are able to brainstorm ideas to bring back to the group.

4.2 Residential Home Participation

The Participation Officer and Commissioning Support Assistant have attended:

- The Shine
- Rosewood House
- Limestone House

Residential Home Managers supported the attendance to the homes to introduce themselves to young people with a view to consult in addition to the Children in Care Council meetings. Moving forward young people in Residential Homes will be consulted with individually on the topics discussed at the CiCC Meeting to enable those who are unable to attend to have their say.

4.3 Newly Qualified Social Worker Induction

CiCC members were invited to take part in the Newly Qualified Social Worker Induction Training. A focus group was held in which a member of the CiCC attended to give their view on being in care and tell the story of their journey, along with what they felt would be useful for Newly Qualified Social Workers to know. The Participation Officer co-produced a PowerPoint Presentation which was then presented at the Newly Qualified Social Worker Induction Training along with a presentation to promote the Children in Care Council. The Participation Officer

will attend this training in the future to present this information from the view of a Looked after Child.

4.4 Aramark Christmas Donations

The Participation Officer collaborated with the Deputy General Manager for Aramark at the University of Derby to facilitate gift bags of Christmas presents, (donated by Aramark) to be delivered to the young people of Derby City Residential Homes. The Participation Officer on behalf of the young people of Derby City Residential Homes sent on a thankyou letter to those who supported this and donated gifts following positive feedback from the Residential Homes.

4.5 Virtual School Enrichment Event

The Participation Officer and Commissioning Support Officer attended the Virtual School Sewing Workshop at the Museum of Making having the opportunity to speak with the group about the Children in Care Council to promote and encourage young people to join. This also gave the opportunity for the Participation Officer to meet with CYP and engage with them on a personal level giving them a point of contact and familiarity should they consider joining the Children in Care Council moving forward.

4.6 Local Authority Collaborative Working

The Participation Officer met with Childrens Rights Officer for Derbyshire County Council to discuss Participation across the region and how we are able to collaborate to allow young people, particularly out of area to participate in their local CiCC. The Participation Officer is further researching CiCC's in other LA's in the East Midlands and will use findings to support and grow the CiCC within Derby City.

At The East Midlands Regional Participation Group meeting held in October it was agreed to hold a regional CiCC working group to discuss language used in Children's Services, this has been provisionally planned for April half term to be held at a venue provided by Lincolnshire County Council.

4.7 School Participation

The Participation Officer has contacted Designated Teachers for Looked After Children within Derby City secondary schools to establish collaborative working with regards to the participation of students who are Looked After Children. Initial roll out will be at West Park School, 2 cohorts will roll out from January 2022 facilitating consultation sessions termly to enable students in the school to take part in topics covered at the CiCC meetings.

5.1 Care Leavers Update

Findings from the Care Leavers Poll which was rolled out during 'Care Leavers week' were collated and fed back to the Personal Adviser within the Leaving Care Service (See Appendix 1)

Key Themes were:

- Consultation was preferred via mobile or electronic surveys
- They would like to be consulted every other month
- 38% would like to be involved with consultation
- Housing was highlighted as the most popular topic area

The Participation Officer will support The Leaving Care Service as necessary with the development with Care Leavers Participation.

Public/stakeholder engagement

6.1 As outlined in this report.

Other options

7.1 Nothing to note for this period.

Financial and value for money issues

8.1 None noted.

Legal implications

9.1 None noted.

Other significant implications

10.1 None noted.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)		
Report sponsor	Gurmail Nizzer, Director, Integrated Commissioning	20/01/2022
Other(s)	Alice Sanghera, Acting Head of Integrated Commissioning, Children & Young People	20/01/2022
Background papers:	n/a	
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Care Leavers Consultation Poll Feedback	

Appendix 1 – Care Leavers Consultation Poll Feedback

Care Leavers Survey Results

Total Responses - 16

1. Would you like to meet with other Care Leavers and have your say about how the Leaving Care Service supports you?

Yes – 6 (38%)

No – 4 (25%)

Not Sure – 6 (38%)

2. How would you like to be consulted with?

A Face-to-Face Forum/Get Together – 5 (33%)

A Virtual Forum/Get Together – 0 (0%)

Mix of both Face to Face and Virtual – 3 (20%)

Mobile/Electronic Surveys – 7 (47%)

3. How often would you like to be consulted with?

Monthly – 5 (33%)

Every other month – 6 (40%)

Every six months – 2 (13%)

Yearly – 2 (13%)

4. What topics or areas would you like to discuss?

Housing – 12 (35%)

Substance Misuse – 0 (0%)

Sexual Health – 2 (6%)

Mental Health – 6 (18%)

Developing Independence – 2 (6%)

Education and Employment – 6 (18%)

Your say on the Leaving Care service – 6 (18%)

5. Do you have any other ideas or suggestions on how you would like to be consulted with?

- “I don’t have any suggestions just I wish all leaving care workers do them jobs like my leaving care Sharon do, she is one of the best care leavers in Derby City Council.”
- “No.”

- “If I have any questions, I will ask my leaving care worker. At the moment I am good thank you.”
- “I think at the moment, I am good and enough! If I have any questions, I will contact my leaving care!